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NEWS RELEASE

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Foster Youth Alumna Thanks Idaho Foster and Adoptive Parents

An alumna of Idaho's foster care program who is now studying social work at Boise State University would like to thank all foster parents for the difference they make in children's lives during Idaho's kick-off of Foster Parent Appreciation Month on Monday, May 3.

Dixie Horn, who grew up in foster homes, will thank the foster parents who made a difference in her life, and the families who open their hearts and homes to the 1,600 Idaho children who need a safe place to live. "I measure my success by the happiness and knowledge given to and obtained from others," Horn says. "I know that so much of my success is due to the unconditional love and guidance my foster parents have given me. They certainly are the role models I honor and admire most in my life." The event will be held at the Idaho Statehouse Rotunda at 11:30 a.m., followed by a reception honoring all foster parents.

Joining Horn will be Dana Kelly, an Idaho foster parent for the past seven years who helps train other foster parents, and Kary Ledbetter, Region 10 Vice-President of the National Foster Parent Association and the President of the Idaho Foster and Adoptive Parent coalition.

Kelly is part of a team of professionals who prepare families through intense training for the challenges of foster parenting. Ledbetter will speak about the importance of the Idaho Foster and Adoptive Parent Coalition's support for adoptive and foster parents, and the need for more foster parents to meet a growing demand for safe homes for children.

The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare and the Casey Family Programs have partnered to make May a special month for foster and adoptive parents. The two organizations have sent letters out to Idaho government and business leaders, and churches, asking them to recognize the efforts of Idaho foster and adoptive parents, and help recruit future parents.

Along with the May 3 event recognizing May as National Foster Parent month, other events are planned throughout the state. These include:

- Region 5 in south-central Idaho is holding a banquet for their foster parents May 18, at the Jerome Country Club;
- Region 6, southeastern Idaho, is having an appreciation picnic for their foster parents on June 20 with food, fun and prizes. Foster families will be entertained by Clowns of America International;
- Region 7 in northeast Idaho is planning an appreciation dinner for foster and adoptive families for Idaho Falls, Rexburg and surrounding communities on May 27th. A luncheon in the western portion of the region, which includes Salmon and Leadore, also is being planned;

- Idaho's other regions are planning picnics, luncheons and other events that will take place through May and June; and
- Casey Family Programs is tying blue ribbons on the tree in front of their office on April 30, followed by an appreciation banquet for foster families on May 7. People are encouraged to drive by and see their Blue Ribbon Tree at 6441 West Emerald in Boise.

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(Editors: For more information, contact Mickey Harmer, IDHW, at 208-334-5695, or Mike Scholl, Casey Family Programs, at 208-377-1771.)